



Anarchism and Anarchists

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THE

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GREENWICH MYSTERY

LETTERS

FROM THE

DEAD.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY  
DAVID NICOLL, 6, WINDMILL STREET, W.  
*April 19th, 1898.*

## A "PROTEST"!

—O—

I will say a few words here respecting the "protest" that appeared in *Freedom* of July, 1897. For two of those who signed the protest I have sincere admiration and respect, but it is well known that, like most men of genius, they are in the affairs of the world as simple as children, and too apt to take their impressions from those who surround them. For these drawing-room revolutionists and their parasites, whose logic is remarkable, for in one breath they declare me insane, through prison tortures suffered for the cause of the people, and in the next advise, for this reason, people to leave me to starve, my respect is not so great. For if their accusation is true, they are monsters of inhumanity, for no one would treat a poor man in this way, who cannot be held responsible for his actions. If it is false, and they know it to be false, they are guilty of using the lies and slanders of the police agents Coulon and Samuels to injure a man, who has done his best, poor as it is, for those who toil and suffer. But why should these people show such malignant hatred for one whose only crime is that he has denounced the intrigues of the police and their agents. Is it possible that these ladies and gentlemen of "pure principle" are the unconscious tools of reaction? As for what I have said, I adhere to every word of it, and neither threats, lies, nor remorseless persecution will induce me to retract one word.

DAVID NICOLL.

# THE GREENWICH MYSTERY.

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## LETTERS FROM THE DEAD.

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### I.—THE DEAD WHO NEVER RETURN.

MR. SAMUELS recently—after comparing himself with characteristic modesty to Bakounine and Blanqui, and other great men who were shamefully slandered by political opponents—demanded that some evidence should be produced of the truth of the accusations made against him. We are anxious to oblige him. It happens, curiously enough, that two of the most important witnesses against him are dead, and “the dead never return.” They sometimes leave, however, some striking evidence behind them. First, I have accused Mr. Samuels of driving William Morris out of the Socialist League. Here is the evidence.

“Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, Hammersmith.

“July 12th, 1890.

“MY DEAR NICOLL,—I have been looking at this week’s *Commonweal*, and I must say I think you are going too far—at any rate, further than I can follow you. You really must put the curb on Samuels’ blatant folly, or you will force me to withdraw all support. I never bargained for this sort of thing when I gave up editorship.

“I look upon you as a sensible and friendly fellow, and I am sure you will take it in a friendly spirit as it is meant; for I feel it is only fair to give you warning of any dissatisfaction I may have.

“Please understand that this is meant to be quite private; and do your best not to drive me off. For I assure you it would be the greatest grief to me if I had to dissociate myself from

men who have been my friends for so long and whom I believe to be at bottom thoroughly good fellows.

"I shall be at Kelmscott, Lechlade, till next Friday, and will send you the new batch of 'News from Nowhere' so that it shall reach you on Friday morning at the latest.—Yours fraternally,

"WILLIAM MORRIS."

"P.S.—I send the proofs on to Blundell."

I promised Morris to look after Mr. Samuels' contributions to the *Commonweal* in future. But I could not stop him from making speeches, and I believe that the speech at the Kay Street Radical Club on November 11th, about shooting Justice Grantham, forced Morris to sever all connection with us. He had been hesitating for some time, and this decided him.

## II.—THE WOMAN WHO DID.

THE next letter was written at a very stormy period—soon after Mr. Samuels was turned out of the Commonweal Group. I may say that Mrs. Bevington is in every way a good witness, a lady of the highest character, a friend of Herbert Spencer and Kropotkin. When she died in the autumn of 1895, notices of her death appeared in all Anarchist and Socialist papers, and Kropotkin and various members of the Freedom Group attended the funeral. Therefore Mrs. Bevington's testimony as to Samuels' "lessons in chemistry" is very valuable.

"25, Lechlade Road, Willesden Green.

"August 27th.

"Kindly send a post-card at once to let me know if this letter reaches you safely, the post gets increasingly uncertain.

"DEAR COMRADE,—You have got the Bourdin history wrong. The facts were that Samuels having, as it is said on good authority,

supplied him with the *new compound*, suggested to him to take it somewhere for the purpose of *experiment*. Well, Bourdin, in all good faith, thought 'experiment' meant experiment; and hit on Epping Forest as a place where he would have a good chance of exploding his compound against a big tree without great danger of its being heard, or him seen before he could get away. This would, however, have obviously been of little use to the police; quite obviously a mere experiment—or else a mere bit of foolish mischief in the eyes of the public; and affording small pretext for a big lucrative scare and scandal. Well, as the fates had it, Samuels met him just as he was starting with his ingredients. 'I'm going,' says Bourdin, touching his pockets significantly, 'Where to?' 'Epping Forest.' 'Oh, don't go there, go to Greenwich Park.' 'All right,' and they went together as far as Westminster, and were seen; and one of them accordingly was made the butt of the police. How do I know Samuels told him where to go? Because Mrs. Samuels, whom I used to see very often at that time, *told me*. Why do I report that conversation above? Because Samuels himself, before he was suspected by the Group, and while he was still desirous of seeming an important character in the eyes of sundry gaping comrades, boastingly related it. His money has been, so far as we know, got *chiefly* from the *Central News*. After one of his reporting escapades, he himself told me he had got £4 10s. for *interviewing himself* from the *Central News* . . . . Samuels came to my house at the end of May (long after he had taken to writing as a politician and aspired after ballooning), and, without more ado, sat down, and proceeded to give minute instructions for making and charging bombs. He described all the ingredients and quantities, where to get them, what pretext to give on buying them, everything about the *latest* (and simplest materials) used—and, after an elaborate lesson, he said, 'I am telling this to everybody; there are soon going to be English acts, too; it is high time there should be.' I asked Mrs. Samuels what she thought of all this!! 'Oh, it is all right,' she said; 'I should have objected only a little while ago; but not now I understand the question better.'

"I am sorry to see an honest man like Barton seriously replying to Samuels in the *Weekly Times and Echo* last week, and calling him 'comrade' every other line. I think Samuels is about the most rubbishy character possible; he is not even a clever traitor or trickster. The boycott, practical, moral, and



above all literary, would punish him more than anything else, and frustrate him, too ! The keynotes of his character are vanity and vindictiveness.

“One thing is certain—Martial Bourdin was a honest little fellow and a dupe . . . . Greetings from all to all.—Yours fraternally,  
“L. S. BEVINGTON.”

I do not advise the reader to give too much credit to Samuels' statements *re* the death of Bourdin. I do not believe, as I have explained in “The Greenwich Mystery,” that the object of Bourdin's journey was merely an experiment with explosives ; but if Mr. Samuels' statements are confirmed by other witnesses, then some belief may be attached to them. Now, I know that Bourdin called for him at his workshop, on that day with the fatal parcel in his pocket. A newspaper report states that he and Bourdin were afterwards seen in Whitehall, and if Samuels had wanted to hand his victim over to the police he could not have taken a better course. Whitehall is within a few yards of Scotland Yard, and since the Fenian explosions the Government offices have been well watched by the political police. He therefore started the game right under the noses of the hounds. Would a serious conspirator have run this terrible risk, when his companion, who had been previously watched by the police, had a suspicious-looking parcel in his pocket ? Why not have gone by Blackfriars or Waterloo ? And if Mr. Samuels was seen by the police in Bourdin's company when he started for Greenwich, why was he not arrested ?

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### III.—DANGEROUS ANARCHISTS.

THE following article appeared in the *Anarchist* of July 15th, 1894 :—

“. . . . It is well known that the editor of a certain paper, who has been inciting to murder for months, has recently



'resigned' his position. He was 'incautious' enough to distribute explosives to some comrades, and unfortunately the police raided the house of one of these men soon after, and did not find anything. No doubt they were disappointed.

"They did not, however, raid the house of the gentleman who distributed the stuff. And strange to say that though this gentleman has publicly boasted his intimacy with Bourdin, and told a reporter that he had parted with that unfortunate young man a few hours before the fatal explosion, yet the police have never arrested this gentleman who knew so much, or searched his house, though they have been making continual raids on London Anarchists. This is remarkable. . . .

"When people are arrested for quoting some lines of a poem by a great writer, and another man is tried at the Old Bailey for having a bottle in his possession with a few grains—at the bottom—of what a Government 'expert' is pleased to call 'fulminate of mercury,' it is time to ask—Why people who incite to murder and supply *others* with explosives are allowed to escape?"

"18, Glengall Road, London, N.W.

"July 22nd, 1894.

"NICOLL,—You are an envious cowardly liar, and I shall make you eat your paper the first time I see you. No comrade in London places any reliance on anything you say or do, as it is well known, here as elsewhere, you are an imbecile and not responsible.

"H. B. SAMUELS."

Though Mr. Samuels' name was not mentioned, he recognised his portrait. Mr. Samuels says I am "an envious, cowardly liar." Let us see what other people say. My first witness is a working man, and he directly confirms my story. Although an Anarchist, his reputation for truthfulness is somewhat higher than Mr. Samuels'.

"South Lambeth.

"DEAR NICOLL,—I write to you to let you know that I am still alive and doing what I can for the cause. In relation to our friend Samuels, I had my suspicions aroused some four months ago, because I noticed that Samuels did not like Quinn, because

Quinn would not let him boss the show. It seems so strange for them to prosecute Cantwell and Quinn, while Samuels has *wrote three times more than that* in the 'Weal and nothing was said about it. I tell you from the time of the Bourdin affair Quinn has been followed about and persecuted wherever he went. There was *something* in Samuels *giving that stuff to them four comrades. Coulon never done so much as that.*—Yours fraternally,

“WILLIAM WRIGHT.”

#### IV.—ET TU, BRUTE !

HERE is another witness—John Turner. Mr. Samuels is very fond of John Turner. Let us hear what he has to say :

“7, Lamb’s Conduit Street, London, W.C.

“July 18th, 1894.

“DEAR NICOLL,—I have just left the barrister (Farrelly), who has offered to defend Quinn over the ‘incitement to murder’ charge. He is also trying to regain possession of the office, and it now seems that you and F. Kitz are registered trustees for the property. This affair has put us into a fine mess, I can assure you—the police still in the possession of the office and doing all they can to ensure a conviction of Cantwell and Quinn. Should they secure a conviction, we believe it means the suppression of all open propaganda. I received the *Anarchists* safe and will do what I can to dispose of them. Your facts *re* Samuels are a bit out, otherwise it is *all right*. The ‘alternate policy of dynamite and philosophy’ was very good.—Yours fraternally,

“JOHN TURNER.”

John Turner, it appears, does not consider “sulphuric acid” an explosive. That is what he means when he asserts that my facts are “a bit out.” Sulphuric acid, it is true, is only an explosive within the meaning of the Explosives Acts, which

enact that any "ingredient" of an explosive becomes an explosive under these Acts, and entitles "a dangerous Anarchist" to ten years' penal servitude. However, he declares the article to be "all right," which, I presume, means that if there are some slight errors in the facts, the conclusions are warranted.

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## V.—DR. MACDONALD.

I HAVE stated that Dr. Macdonald declined an inquiry into the case, though I told him plainly at Sheffield that I suspected him. My readers will see that not only Dr. Macdonald, but the "Freedom Group," have joined in the conspiracy of silence, and done their best to hush up the case.

"Gorton, Manchester.

"July 24th, 1894.

"DEAR NICOLL,—What a comical fellow you are! No one that I am aware of wants to limit the sphere of your liberty of action. Certainly I don't. I thought your article on 'S' indiscreet and your conclusions not warranted by fact, but—now then as to inquiring. I wrote to Mrs. ——— (a prominent member of the Freedom Group) and to Dr. Macdonald, asking for the opinion of the London comrades on the matter. I told Mrs. ——— what passed at Sheffield, and stated you requested her to take the initiative in the matter—requesting the favour of an immediate reply. This was last week directly I arrived home, but Mrs. ——— has not replied yet. Macdonald wrote at once stating that the affair had died a natural death, and almost been forgotten, and that the comrades had too much *real work on hand to bother about personalities*, expressing the opinion that if a conference were called *nobody would attend*. So it is out of my hands and your liberty of action remains unfettered.—  
Yours for Anarchy,

"HERBERT STOCKTON."

I don't know what Macdonald meant by "real work." I presume it was nothing in the blowing-up line. If the Bourdin affair was "real work," the less we have of such work the better. As to Macdonald, he stands and falls by Samuels; if Samuels is not a police agent, then the Dr. is also an honest man. But I repeat that Dr. Macdonald admitted to me, that Samuels had taken the explosives from his surgery with his knowledge. I have proclaimed this from the house-tops, yet neither Samuels nor Macdonald are arrested. Yet I was told I had put Macdonald in deadly peril! There are none so blind as those that will not see.

As to Mr. Samuels, I have no hesitation in stating on the evidence cited above, that a man who incites to the use of explosives and freely distributes them, and who miraculously escapes arrest though seen in company, by Scotland Yard detectives, with his unfortunate dupe on his way to Greenwich, is a police agent, and has earned the wages of Judas. I am glad my task is over. I did not seek it. It was forced upon me by those who allowed a scoundrel to escape without exposure, and who have done their best to hound me out of public life for the mere expression of opinion.

## "COMMONWEAL" DRAW.

THE following are the winning numbers :—

3	...	600		5	...	631
10	...	601		6	...	90
8	...	166		11	...	667
4	...	935		1	...	93
12	...	51		7	...	554
2	...	304		9	...	440









